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NEWS

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Commissioner's Report on Copyright Challenge

On February 16, 1972, Commissioner James F. Davis of the U. S. Court of Claims filed a "Report of Commissioner to the Court" on the copyright infringement suit against the Federal Government by the Williams and Wilkins Company, a medical publishing firm in Baltimore. The findings of the preliminary report recommend in favor of Williams and Wilkins.

The petition against the Federal Government was filed on February 27, 1968, and alleged that NLM and the NIH library, by providing on interlibrary loan single photocopies of journal articles to libraries for the use of health professionals, had infringed the journal publisher's copyright.

Government attorneys plan to file an exception to the Commissioner's Report and a decision by the Court of Claims is still some time away. In the meantime, no changes are planned in NLM operations.

MEDLINE Network Shifts Into High Gear

MEDLINE, an acronym for MEDLARS On-Line, is an extension of the AIM-TWX experimental on-line system initiated by NLM in May 1970. At the end of February 1972, its data base included 400,000 citations from 1,100 of the leading journals indexed for *Index Medicus* -- almost 60 percent of the citations printed in *Index Medicus* during the past three years. Early in February, a communications network became operational, providing toll-free telephone line access in about 35 cities to the MEDLINE data base on NLM's new IBM 370/155 computer. All Regional Medical Libraries (RML's) and MEDLARS Centers will have access to the network, and user agreements with Resource Libraries participating in regional activities are being developed to provide additional access points. By the end of 1972, between 100 and 150 institutions are expected to be active MEDLINE users.

Network Organization

The RML network is the organizational structure within which MEDLINE service patterns are being developed. Each RML plays a key role in developing and coordinating services within its region, with full backup support from NLM. Briefing sessions have been held at most RML institutions with Resource Libraries designated by each RML. NLM staff have participated actively with RML Directors in these sessions.

The necessary formal agreement between NLM and each designated Resource Library must be endorsed by the concerned Regional Medical Library Director to insure

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
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NEWS

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that consistent service policies will be developed within each region. As of February 1, more than 20 such agreements had been signed and over 30 were in some stage of negotiation.

Cooperating institutions must provide their own terminals and pay for any telephone line charges to the closest node in the NLM network. They are also required to send a qualified person for an intensive three-week training program at NLM. In three sessions thus far completed, thirty-five people (including some NLM staff members) have received MEDLINE training. Sessions are scheduled at six-week intervals until the end of 1972. In early March, an additional training session will be held in Los Angeles at the University of California Biomedical Center Library.

Services Provided

When a bibliographic request is initiated at a MEDLINE terminal, the interactive dialogue permits the query to be negotiated to provide the best possible retrieval. Up to 20 or 25 citations may be retrieved on-line, together with the subject terms (tracings) under which the articles were indexed. A larger retrieval from the data base may be requested. This is provided off-line by the computer at NLM at the end of the day, and mailed either the same evening or the next morning. At present, MEDLINE may be queried Monday through Friday, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and from 2:30 to 4 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, as well as on Wednesday evenings from 6 to 9.

Bibliographic retrieval from the full MEDLARS data base (1969 to date) and from back files of the MEDLARS base may subsequently be requested, if needed, by a conventional MEDLARS I search, obtainable through MEDLARS Centers. When ELHILL III* programs become fully operational in July 1973, it will be possible to retrieve the entire data base off-line with the ELHILL programs, and conventional MEDLARS I searches will be largely discontinued.

NLM has begun to phase out the operations of MEDLARS Centers, including those at RML's, as MEDLINE capabilities develop. Demand searches are to be directed, whenever possible, to the MEDLINE data base. By July 1973, all RML's and MEDLARS Centers will become MEDLINE Centers, providing services on the same basis as any other MEDLINE institution. However, each RML will retain regional management and coordination responsibilities, and will develop, as needed, region-wide patterns for

* ELHILL designates the computer programs developed to operate NLM's various data bases. ELHILL I programs operate AIM-TWX, ELHILL II is an improved version being used for MEDLINE, and ELHILL III will be a major component of the programs developed for MEDLARS II.

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reimbursement of line charges and any other charges for personnel costs. However, all MEDLINE Centers will provide the manpower, as well as the terminals, to support the operation within their own institution.

After this phase-out is accomplished, any request which cannot be satisfied by a MEDLINE search can be referred to NLM, where conventional MEDLARS search formulation capabilities will be maintained.

Implementation of MEDLINE

In accord with recently established priorities, implementation during 1972 will be limited primarily to RML's, MEDLARS Centers, Resource Libraries, and selected Federal installations. As computer capability permits, services may be extended in 1973 to larger hospitals and other institutions. It is now estimated that the present NLM network can serve at least 200 institutions with a maximum of 40 to 45 simultaneous users. Since response times increase dramatically with only modest overloads, every effort will be made to adjust the user load to the systems capacity in order to provide effective use.

NLM is currently planning to develop additional computer capability within the network to accommodate demands for services beyond its current computer capacity and to provide backup during any periods of breakdown.

Full cooperation from all users in proper use of the system will greatly extend the capacity of MEDLINE to serve a larger group of users.

For further information on MEDLINE and persons to contact, write to NLM's Public Information Office for a Fact Sheet.

Dr. William H. Feldman, distinguished pathologist (left), stands with NLM Director Martin M. Cummings, M.D., near some of Dr. Feldman's renowned portraits of his fellow pathologists, now on display in the NLM lobby.

CuBE Comes Full Circle

The *Current Bibliography of Epidemiology*, previously published by the American Public Health Association from NLM MEDLARS tapes, is now being published by the National Library of Medicine and sold by the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, at $12.50 a year (12 monthly issues) or $15.75 for foreign mailing. Vol. IV, Nos. 1 and 2 (Jan. and Feb. 1972) will be sent by the Library without charge to previous subscribers.

CuBE provides a comprehensive, continuing index to periodical medical literature of concern to teachers, administrators, investigators, and practitioners in community medicine, and to others concerned with the etiology, epidemiology, prevention, and

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control of disease. Each volume consists of 12 monthly issues and an annual cumulation published after the end of the year. Future annual cumulations will be sold separately from the monthly issues. The 1972 cumulation will probably be available early in 1973, but no orders for the cumulation will be accepted until the official price is announced.

To order the monthly *CuBE*, send a check, money order, or Supt. of Documents coupon to Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 20402.

NMAC Pamphlets

The National Medical Audiovisual Center (NMAC) has recently prepared two guides concerned with the organization of audiovisual materials. "Primer for Media Resources Librarians" provides suggestions for surveying audiovisual needs or interests through checklists, as well as procedures to be considered in organizing and managing a media center.

"Cataloging Non-print at NMAC - A Guide for the Medical Librarian" describes cataloging procedures used by the NMAC staff. Both pamphlets may be requested from the Reference Section, National Medical Audiovisual Center (Annex), Station K, Atlanta, Georgia 30324.

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